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## News From Yonkers City Council President Chuck Lesnick

October 9, 2008

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### Avalon Yonkers Scoping Session Postponed

Avalon Yonkers has requested that the City Council adjourn the scoping session which had been scheduled for Tuesday, October 14.

We were pleased to accommodate the request as it gives us more time to focus on the Findings for the SFC project.

The Real Estate Committee will be calling a meeting for Tuesday night either before or after the Columbus Day Committee coffee and Council meeting.

[And the vote is...](#)

On Tuesday, the Council last night voted 5 to 2 to accept the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) prepared for the [Struever, Fidelco, Cappelli](#) (SFC) project.

The Council has been reviewing and revising the FEIS with the help of its consultants since August and the DEIS many months before that.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) considered the project's impact on Yonkers with regard to such issues as traffic, building height, affordable housing, and more. The public commented on the DEIS last Spring. The FEIS responds to the public's comments and describes any significant project changes.

The next steps now include bi-weekly Tuesday and Thursday Real Estate Committee meetings to go through the process of preparing the environmental Findings.

According to [State Environmental Quality Review Act](#) (SEQRA), the earliest a vote on the Findings can take place is 10 days after the FEIS is approved. We are hoping to vote to adopt the Findings within the next few weeks.

The Findings will detail the mitigation measures necessary to address the environmental impacts identified and discussed in the DEIS and the FEIS.

There are several other actions that the Council and other City boards will have to take in the coming months. One will be the Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) which embodies the business terms between the City and SFC regarding the transfer to SFC of City property necessary for the project. Another action will be the site plan review by the Planning Board, which will examine detailed plans for the project.

The City Council will also have to approve the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) plan.

**Update on 87 Nepperhan Ave.**





On Tuesday night, the Council's Real Estate Committee scheduled an important meeting for Oct. 16 to consider the merits of the recommendation of the Landmarks Board to landmark 87 Nepperhan Avenue, the art deco building next to City Hall.

The building was originally a health clinic in 1930-33 but now houses municipal offices such as the Parking Violations Bureau and the Buildings Department.

SFC has proposed demolishing the building and nearby structures along New Main Street to build a parking lot with ground-level retail to complement its downtown development.

As required under the city code, the Landmarks Board only looked at whether the building was historically significant in making its landmarking recommendation.

The Council will not be voting on the landmarking application at the meeting on Oct. 16. Rather, the landmarks applicant will give a presentation to the Council. In addition to historic significance, the Council in its discretion, may consider other factors such as the economic viability of adaptive reuse or alternative development proposals.

However, the Council must conduct a thorough examination of all implications of landmarking this building, including factors such as economic viability, adaptive reuse, alternative preservation methods and the like. Accordingly, the Council has also invited SFC to present alternatives which could save the entire building and/or some of the building's historic art deco elements.

Expect the Council to vote on the building's disposition when they vote to adopt the SFC environmental Findings.

My office will keep you posted...

#### Elizabeth Seton and the SWEP

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has been completed and accepted for the proposed South Westchester Executive Park Expansion (SWEP), Amendment of Comprehensive



Plan and development of the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center.

The new 136-bed pediatric skilled nursing facility building will not only provide state- of-the-art pediatric nursing and rehabilitation, but also an inpatient and outpatient special needs school (currently the John A. Coleman School, Manhattan & White Plains) as well as a long-term home care program.

The City of Yonkers, as the Lead Agency, is requesting public comments until November 17 which will be accepted in writing by Lee Ellman, Planning Director, Yonkers Planning Bureau, 87 Nepperhan Ave., Suite 320, Yonkers, NY 10701. You may also email your comments by clicking [he re](#). The City Administration is the lead Agency for the South Westchester Executive Park (SWEP) Expansion to accommodate the Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center and other projects.

#### Greyston's New Historic Building Facade Design Unveiled



The Greyston Foundation recently retained a well-known architectural firm to incorporate a newly designated historic district into the façade of their \$35 million housing tower in downtown Yonkers.

Israel Berger & Associates LLC worked on the restoration and adaptive reuse of several prominent buildings in New York City, including Carnegie Hall, the Hearst Tower, and the Octagon, a 19th-century insane asylum on Roosevelt Island that was converted into luxury apartments.

Drawings for this project were unveiled at last week's Landmark Preservation Board meeting detailing plans for restoring the 19th-century building facades from 44 to 54 Warburton Ave. and on 6 to 8 Wells Ave.

Warburton Riverview will offer 108 middle income apartments for middle-class wage earners.

"The decision to preserve the buildings has been made, so we're going to make them the best we can and as beautiful as we can," Greyston President Steven Brown told the [Journal News](#) this week.

The compromise between partial demolition and adaptive reuse of the area arose in April when the City Council voted to landmark the area which is comprised of 13 buildings in various architectural styles from about 1860 to 1900.

The design is subject the approval by the Yonkers Zoning Board of Appeals who will hold their next meeting at 6 pm on Oct. 21 at City Hall.

#### Wait 'Til Next Year

Unfortunately, Gov. Paterson recently decided to veto the Rehab Tax Credit Expansion Bill (S.5425/A.30000) we wrote about in this newsletter.

If passed, this legislation would have expanded the NYS rehabilitation tax





credit program to include higher incentive levels and increased program flexibility, with the intention of accelerating program use in New York State and specifically in Yonkers.

The veto message cited fiscal concerns and revenue impacts as chief causes.

The Preservation League of New York will shift its focus immediately to securing the rehabilitation tax credit language in the 2009-10 Executive Budget proposal. They welcome your continued support in this advocacy and can be contacted by clicking [here](#).

### One Day Left to Register to Vote



It's not too late to register to vote in the general election. But you're cutting it close with only one day left...

Applications must be postmarked no later than October 10 and received by a board of elections no later than October 15 to be valid.

If you are voting by absentee ballot, you have until October 28 to postmark your application.

To view a full calendar of deadlines, click [here](#).

You can download your voter registration form [here](#) or click [here](#) for an absentee ballot.

For more information, contact the [Westchester County Board of Elections](#).

### Fire Prevention Week



The Yonkers Fire Department is observing National Fire Prevention Week (October 5 through October 13) with educational programs that teach fire prevention practices and techniques to school children and adults.

This year's theme, chosen by the National Fire Protection Association, is "Preventing Home Fires."

The month of October will bring an increase in requests for curbside



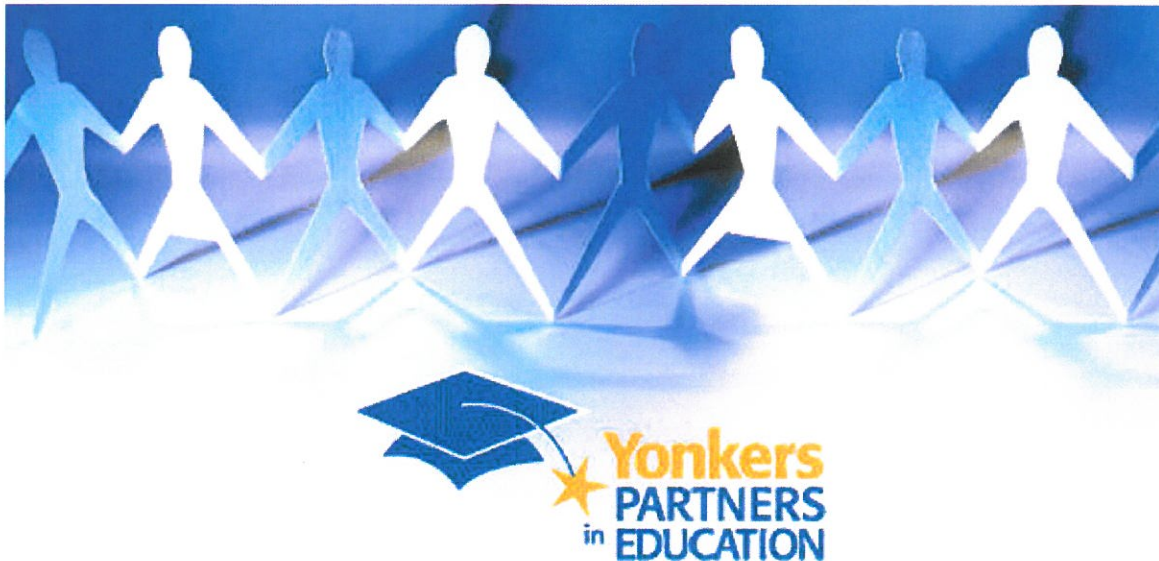
seminars, which is when an in-service Fire Company visits a location, such as a school, community group or senior center to conduct a Fire Prevention class and firehouse visits.

Also each October the Fire Department entertains numerous requests for Fire Station Visits, which is when a group (usually school children) visits a Firehouse to receive a Fire Prevention class from an in service Fire Company.

Some of the topics covered will include Cooking with Care, Everyday Electrical Safety, Healthy Heating, Avoiding Smoking- Related Fires, Candle with Caution, Fire Safety 101.

*Photo: Deputy Chief John Flynn, head of the Fire Prevention Division, discusses fire prevention tips at a press conference held in front of the Fire Department's "smoke house" simulator.*

#### Yonkers Partners in Education (YPIE) Gala



Join hands to benefit the school children of Yonkers by attending a fabulous fundraiser at 6:30 pm on Thursday, October 30 at Villa Barone Manor in the Bronx.

Enjoy cocktails and a silent auction followed by dinner and dancing.

The beneficiary, Yonkers Partners in Education (YPIE), is a non-profit organization striving to give children attending Yonkers Public Schools access to quality educations in preparation for high school graduation, college, work, and success in life.

To purchase tickets, click [here](#) or call YPIE directly at 914-377-4882.

#### Domestic Violence Vigil



On Thursday, October 2 my office held its second annual candlelight vigil in support of Domestic Violence Awareness Month along with My Sisters' Place.

The event began with a ride through the streets of downtown Yonkers, led by three Yonkers motorcycle groups that will be working with us throughout the month to spread awareness.

On board were Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Executive Director of My Sisters' Place, Karen Cheeks-Lomax, honored guests who shared their personal stories with us during the ceremony, and friends.

We would like to extend a big thank you to Mike and Luca from Transit Auto Towing for donating the truck to help us promote the event.

Close to 100 people attended the ceremony during which elected officials read statements written by victims and survivors shared their stories.

The ceremony ended with a beautiful candlelight vigil in Council Chambers.

The next event is set for Saturday, October 18th at 5 pm when the Yonkers Motorcycle Club, 914 Mc- Westchester Sports Alliance and Forever Strong will ride through Yonkers.

They will meet at Trevor Park, ride to Warburton Ave. and then travel to City Hall where they will stop before heading down Nepperhan Ave. to Yonkers Ave. and then to the Mt. Vernon- Yonkers border.

For more information, email [C arol Bengis](#) or call her in my office directly at 914-377-6065.

**Yonkers Profile**





Madeline and John Pizzuto sought help from our office on Monday with replacing a lightpole on their street. It also happened to be their 45th wedding anniversary.

A small group soon gathered, sparking a conversation about the secret to marriage and happiness.

John said the secret is out. "I say 'yes' once in a while," he quipped as Madeline playfully smacked his shoulder.

They met back in 1961 at social dancing club in Yonkers called the Paddock when he asked her to rumba. Three weeks later, he called for their first date.

"It was a long time to wait," Madeline agreed. "But I was not sitting by the phone either."

Dancing is still one of their favorite activities and they go out as often as they can. Both insist this is the key to a happy marriage-- spending time together doing things both of you enjoy.

Sometimes, that took a bit of coaxing, John admits, recalling a story about how Madeline had no interest in taking up one of his favorite sports-- skiing. So he bought her a pair of Hart skis for Valentine's Day.

"He's a clever one," she says, laughing.

That was in 1961. They married three years later and moved to the Crestwood section of Yonkers in 1967 when the average cost of a new home in the US was \$14,250; gas was 33 cents a gallon and a new car cost \$2,750.

There they raised their daughter, who graduated from Roosevelt High School and became a doctor. Susan, her husband, a network television producer, and their two children, ages 4 and 8, live just two blocks away.



The Pizuttos are civic-minded and have enjoyed working as community activists, namely as Democratic District Leaders since 1968, and on the Columbus Day Committee since 1985.

"We work together to help our community for generations of our family to enjoy," John says.

"It's just another thing we enjoy doing together," Madeline adds.

With their lightpole problem on its way to be solved, John held the door for his bride as they discussed where in Yonkers to enjoy a quiet dinner alone.

#### Give Blood on Halloween



**I WANT YOU!**  
**TO DONATE BLOOD!**  
**HALLOWEEN EVE!**

Come support the [Yonkers Public Library](#) in their Halloween Blood Drive. This joint project of the Riverfront Library and the [Hudson Valley Blood Service](#) will feature a free Halloween photo booth and a Halloween candy bag for each donor. There will also be a prize for the best costume.

The blood drive takes place on Friday, October 31, 2008 from 11:30 am-5pm and will be in community rooms A&B on the 2nd floor.

For more information, please contact Jody Maier at (914) 337-1500 ext. 461.

More Halloween events include:

The [Andrus Planetarium](#) at the [Hudson River Museum](#) is holding a series of Halloween events that will be out of this world! The event takes place on October 31 from 5-8 pm and will feature a scavenger hunt in the museum's galleries, a science-themed costume contest, a viewing of the October 31 crescent moon, and live storytelling. Free tickets will be available at 5 pm at the lobby desk. This event is first come, first seated.

The Samuel H. Dow Fife and Drum Corps will hold their 22nd Annual Raggamuffin Parade on October 31. Parade lineup starts at 6pm, and kickoff is at 7pm. The parade will start at Getty Square and will travel west on Main Street to North Broadway, ending in a party at 342 Warburton Ave. There will be free food and candy for children.

#### Downtown Art Event



On Sunday, October 19 from 4-7 pm Evolution Arts is hosting a photographic art exhibit at [66 Main Street](#) in downtown Yonkers to unveil 100 newly-installed, historical photographs of Yonkers and its citizens.

Come tour the art and enjoy refreshments on the glorious rooftop deck of the downtown's first geothermal building.

Check out [Yonkers Arts Blog](#) for all things creative in our City.

#### Week Without Violence

**Week  
without  
Violence**  
eliminating racism  
empowering women **ywca**

The YWCA is hosting its annual "Week Without Violence," a nationwide effort to unite individuals against violence in our communities.

The call for an end to violence will be held the third week in October in collaboration with our office and highlighted with a series of activities in its observance.

Please join us at 4 pm on Sunday, October 19 for an interdenominational memorial and candlelight service honoring members of our community who have lost their lives to senseless acts of violence. This day opens the week-long dialogue with poignant reminders of victims of violence and resolutions to create non-violent

communities.

The event will be held at the YWCA, 87 South Broadway, Yonkers.

For more information please contact [Yejid e Okunribido](#), Executive Director at (914) 963- 0640 ext. 110.



### Masquerade Ball for Childrens' Village

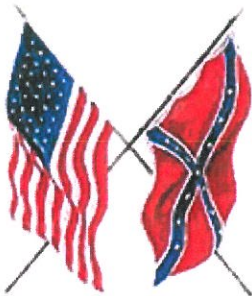
The Childrens' Village will host their Annual Masquerade Ball at 7 pm on October 25 in Yonkers at the Historic Roosevelt Ballroom of Philipsburg Performing Arts Center, 8 Hudson St.

Please join the Halloween-themed evening of cocktails, dinner, and dancing. This event raises money for runaway and homeless youth in Westchester County.

Tickets are \$100 and sponsorships are available. To download a PDF invitation, please click [here](#). For more information please call 914-693-0600 ext. 1224. Click [here](#) to see pictures of last year's event.



### Shenandoah in Yonkers



The [Actors Conservatory Theatre](#) proudly presents [Shenandoah](#), a Civil War musical drama, throughout the month of October.

Performance dates are:

Thursday, 10/16 at 8 pm

Fridays, 10/17 and 10/24 at 8 pm

Saturdays, 10/18 and 10/25 at 8 pm

and Sundays, 10/19 and 10/26 at 2 pm

[Email](#) or call (914) 391-6558 for more information. Actors Conservatory Theatre, 20 Buckingham Road, Yonkers.

\$22 Adults, \$20 Seniors; \$15 children 12 and under. Special price on Thursday \$18 all seats.

### Hudson Hues



Join leaf peepers for a fall foliage tour from 2-5 pm on Sunday, November 2, aboard the [New York Water Taxi](#).

Hudson Hues offers premier seating to Westchester residents and unparalleled views of our region's famed fall foliage. You can catch the boat at the Yonkers Pier as it heads up the Hudson.

Adults: \$35  
Seniors: \$25

Includes tour, snacks, beverages, and autumn themed goodie bags!

Call Darrolyn Chavers, Customer Service, at (212) 742-1969 ext 222 or email by clicking [here](#).

#### Yonkers Concerts



Yonkers will proudly host two musical events this fall.

The Yonkers Philharmonic will have a concert at Saunders High School at 3 pm on Sunday, October 26. The [Fine Arts Orchestral Society of Yonkers](#) (FAOS) sponsors of the Yonkers Philharmonic Orchestra. FAOS leads the way in providing free live symphonic concerts to residents of the city of Yonkers, and its surrounding communities. Sponsored by FAOS, the



## Yonkers Philharmonic

Orchestra performs four free concerts each year at Saunders High School.

In the past, the orchestra has performed outdoors in Getty Square and at the Cross County Shopping Center, the Hudson River Museum, the Yonkers Marina, and Untermeyer Park.

FAOS recognizes, showcases and encourages talented young musicians. When Pasquale A. Pistone, founder of the Yonkers Philharmonic Orchestra, died in 1971, FAOS started giving scholarships in his memory to promising music students from Yonkers. This program grew into their current Concerto Competition, in which talented high-school students from all over Westchester County are offered the opportunity to compete for scholarships and to perform as soloists with the orchestra.

For more information about this concert, please contact Josephine Caruso at ( 914) 965-5232 or email her by clicking [here](#).

The Italian Feast Band will also hold a 3 pm concert on Sunday, October 19 at Saunders High School.

### Bike Tour de Yonkers



The annual bike Tour de Yonkers will start at 8 am sharp on Sunday, Oct. 19 at the Yonkers Pier.

All bike riders will start together but will have three routes to choose from.

1. A fairly flat 12-mile route.
2. A 25-mile route which has some hills but is pretty doable.
3. A 35-mile route which is longer and hillier than the first two.

Ride 1 closely follows the route of the Yonkers Marathon with scenic views of the Hudson River up to Hastings and then back down to Nepperhan Valley, ending at the Yonkers Pier.

Rides 2 and 3 circle around Yonkers covering other city highlights, including Tibbetts Brook Park, McLean Ave., and Sarah Lawrence College, to name a few landmarks.

Please pre-register by Friday to reserve your official tee-shirt by emailing the bike club by clicking [here](#).

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